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In this issue

German leader at Dachau camp
Dinosaur neck study
Hyperloop proposal
The UK, Spain & Gibraltar
Japan's Sakurajima
Condors rescued
Grand Canal accident
Voyager in interstellar space?
The olinguito
New president in Mali
Picasso's murals in Oslo
Tsunami boat vote
Cardboard cathedral opens
India and Pakistan celebrate Independence Day
Jungle pair return to modern world
Near Death Experience study
Day for left handers
UN inspectors in Syria
Who was the Mona Lisa?
Glossary Crossword and Wordsearch Puzzle



An Egyptian army bulldozer moves to clear one of the street protest camps in Cairo

ARMY CRACKDOWN IN EGYPT

Early in the morning of 14th August police and army forces approached two large protest camps in Cairo, the capital of Egypt. The camps, which blocked several busy streets, had been there for six weeks. Members of the Muslim Brotherhood and their supporters were occupying them. Those in the camps insisted that they would only end their protest if Mohammed Morsi were reinstated.

General Sisi is the leader of the Egyptian army. Just before the protest camps were set up he arranged for Mr Morsi to be removed from power. Mr Morsi had been elected as Egypt's president 12 months previously. This was the first time in history that Egypt's leader had been elected democratically. Mr Morsi is a member of the Muslim Brotherhood. This is both a religious and a political organisation.

Members of the security forces used bulldozers to clear away barricades and

tents. Tear gas was fired. Soon afterwards shooting broke out. The authorities announced that 600 people had died when the camps were cleared. These included a number of soldiers and policemen. The Muslim Brotherhood claimed that at least 2,000 were killed. When force is used to stop protests in this way it is often described as a 'crackdown'.

After the protesters' camps were removed General Sisi declared a state of emergency. This gives the army and police greater powers. A curfew was announced. So now anyone on the streets during the hours of darkness is likely to be arrested.

For over 30 years Hosni Mubarak was Egypt's president. Before becoming president he was an air force commander. During this time the Muslim Brotherhood was banned. Everyone had to obey strict rules. People could be punished if they

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criticised Mr Mubarak or his government. Many feared the police, and there were no proper elections.

At the beginning of 2011 there were large street protests in Cairo. Those taking part demanded that Mr Mubarak step down. The protesters accused him and his government ministers of being corrupt and dishonest. They wanted proper elections to be held so they could democratically elect new leaders.



Anti-Morsi protesters in Tahrir Square, in Cairo

The huge street demonstrations continued for several weeks. After Mr Mubarak discovered that he no longer controlled the army and police he agreed to stand down. The army took over and promised that elections would be organised. Mr Mubarak was arrested. He was put on trial for corruption and ordering the security forces to shoot at protesters.

Elections for Egypt's parliament took place at the end of 2011. The Muslim Brotherhood won far more seats than any other party. Mr Morsi won the presidential election, which was held 12 months ago.

Not all Egyptians were happy. Many dislike the Muslim Brotherhood. These people, especially younger Egyptians, want their country to be a secular state. This means that religion and politics are kept separate. Some claim that the Muslim Brotherhood only won the elections because it was better organised. Under Mr Mubarak all political parties were banned. So,

after he stepped down, new secular parties had little time to prepare for the elections.

Soon after Mr Morsi became president he declared that he would have extra powers. He also announced that a new constitution, or rules by which the country is governed, would be written. Most of those who worked on these new rules were Muslim Brotherhood supporters.

Many people were angry when they discovered that the new constitution included a number of religious laws. People began to criticise Mr Morsi for not acting for the whole country. They accused him of favouring the Muslim Brotherhood and ignoring everyone else. Others complained about the economy. They said Mr Morsi and his ministers were doing nothing to improve it.

Most Egyptians follow the Islamic faith. Yet, around ten percent of the population are Coptic Christians. There have been Coptic Christians in Egypt for over 1,700 years. After Mr Morsi became president some Muslim Brotherhood members attacked several Coptic churches. Mr Morsi seemed to do little to stop this violence.

On 30th June millions of people took part in huge street protests in Cairo and other Egyptian cities. This day marked the first anniversary of Mr Morsi's election win. The demonstrators demanded that he resign. Hundreds of thousands crowded into Tahrir Square, in the centre of Cairo.

General Sisi announced that politicians on both sides would have to find a way of ending the demonstrations. The country, he warned, was in danger of collapse. Several senior members of Mr Morsi's government decided to resign. Yet Mr Morsi refused to stand down. He accused the

army of taking sides. The next day a group of army officers went to Mr Morsi's office and arrested him.

General Sisi then declared that Adly Mansour would be Egypt's interim leader. Mr Mansour is one of Egypt's most senior judges. General Sisi said that new elections would be held. But they are unlikely to take place soon. Many Egyptians, especially those who dislike the Muslim Brotherhood, are happy with what the army has done.

In anger at what had happened to Mr Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood set up the two protest camps. Since the crackdown many of the Muslim Brotherhood's leaders have been arrested. There have been violent clashes in several cities. In one incident Muslim Brotherhood supporters set fire to some government buildings. There have been demonstrations in support of the Muslim Brotherhood in other Muslim countries. These include Turkey, Pakistan, Malaysia and Indonesia.

Other countries such as the USA and European Union (EU) have become worried about Egypt. Their leaders are unsure if they should support what the army is doing. Some argue that these countries should withhold the large sums of money they give to Egypt each year. This money, they say, should not be given to the country while the army is in charge.

Some people predict that Egypt will now return to how it was when Mr Mubarak ran the country. On 21st August a judge declared that Mr Mubarak was not guilty of some of the things he was accused of. This means the former president will leave the prison in which he has been held for the past two years. It's likely that he will be kept under house arrest instead. ■

CHANCELLOR VISITS DACHAU

Angela Merkel, the chancellor, or leader, of Germany visited the Dachau camp on 20th August. This was the first time that one of Germany's chancellors had visited the former Nazi prison camp.

The Dachau camp is in the southern part Germany. It is about 16 kilometres (ten miles) from the city of Munich. The camp was first opened in 1933, soon after the Nazi Party came to power.

At first Dachau was used for German political prisoners. Most were those who disagreed with the ideas of the Nazi leaders. Later some Jewish people were also sent to Dachau. A number of small camps, or sub-camps, were set up nearby. Dachau was what's known as a concentration camp. People kept in these camps were forced to do manual work.



Dachau concentration camp entrance

During the Second World War (1939 – 1945) the Germans set up many more prison camps. Most were built to a similar design as Dachau. Some, in other countries such as Poland, were specially designed. This was so tens of thousands of people could be murdered inside them. Most of the people sent to these places were Jewish. Nowadays these types of camps are usually called **extermination** camps.

After the war began more people were sent to Dachau. Many, but not all, were political prisoners. Nearly

3,000 priests, from several European countries, were imprisoned in the camp. During the war Dachau contained prisoners from several different countries. These included Poland, Czechoslovakia, Russia and Austria. Eventually, in April 1945, the prisoners of Dachau were freed when American soldiers arrived in this part of Germany.

It's thought that during the 12 years that Dachau was used as a concentration camp just over 200,000 people were kept there. Of these about 40,000 died. In the final years of the war conditions in Dachau were very bad. Most of those who died did so from disease or starvation. Their bodies were cremated, or burnt, in specially built ovens.

Today it is possible to visit the Dachau camp. Few of the original buildings remain. Several have been rebuilt. They are part of a museum that tells the history of the camp. Nearby are many memorials to those who died there.

Mrs Merkel is the leader of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party. She has been the German chancellor since 2005. Mrs Merkel is often described as being one of the most powerful women in the world. The next election in Germany will be held on 22nd September. Most people expect the CDU to do well and for Mrs Merkel to stay on as chancellor for another four years.

During her visit to Dachau Mrs Merkel made a short speech. She said that the camp 'fills me with deep shame'. Mrs Merkel walked around some of the camp buildings. She also placed a large wreath of flowers at one of the memorials.

In recent weeks Mrs Merkel has been visiting different parts of Germany campaigning for the

NewsCAST

TOILET HACKING? — Security officials in Japan have issued a warning about a new luxury toilet. The toilets are expensive to buy and are fitted in people's homes. They can be automatically controlled via a smart phone app. With this it is possible to remotely lift the toilet's lid and operate the flush. Using the app the owner can also spray water, blow warm air, play music and release pleasant smells, or fragrances. However, the problem is that any smart phone can operate the toilet, as long as it is not too far away. So while someone is using it another person could switch on the warm air and water spray and operate the flush. The officials say it's unlikely that cyber criminals will be interested in 'hacking' the toilet but practical jokers might.

election. Some people said they admired her for visiting the Dachau camp. However, others said it was the wrong thing to do during an election campaign. ■

DINOSAUR NECKS

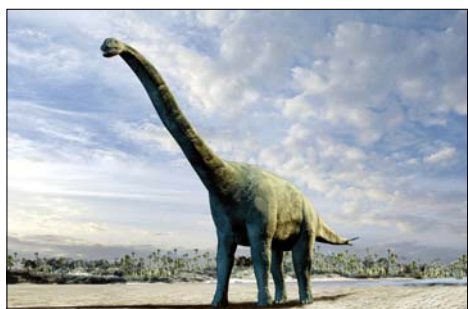
A team of scientists from the USA have been studying certain types of dinosaurs that had long necks. They believe their research shows that even though their necks were very long, they were not as flexible as many people think.

The long-necked dinosaurs the scientists studied were all sauropods. This name comes from two Ancient Greek words that mean 'lizard foot'. It's thought that there were over 100 different species of sauropod. Their fossilised bones have been

found on all the Earth's continents, including Antarctica.

Sauropods walked on four legs and had long necks and tails. They probably travelled around in herds. These dinosaurs were herbivores. They ate vegetation such as grasses, and the leaves and smaller branches of trees. Some sauropods grew to be over 30 metres (100 feet) long. The biggest ones weighed ten times more than an African elephant. They probably ate around 400 kilograms (880 pounds) of vegetation a day.

Computer-generated films and images of sauropods often show them moving their necks in many different directions. They may be reaching up to get leaves from a tall tree or eating plants near the ground. These images therefore make it look like their necks were very flexible.



Computer-generated image of a sauropod

The team of scientists studied the necks of ostriches. They wanted to see how they compared with sauropod necks. Nowadays scientists are sure modern-day birds are related to dinosaurs. This was first suggested over 70 years ago, as there are similarities between birds' skeletons and the fossilised skeletons of some dinosaurs.

Ostriches come from Africa. Nowadays some are kept on farms in other countries. They are large birds that are unable to fly. Ostriches have long necks and long legs. Adults can be 2.8 metres (nine feet) tall.

Even though their size is different, the neck bones of ostriches and

sauropods are of a similar shape. Ostriches' necks are not very flexible. This, the scientists say, is because of the muscle and cartilage that is attached to the birds' neck bones.

The scientists suspect that sauropods had similar necks. So they too would have had large amounts of muscle and cartilage attached to their neck bones. This means that their necks would be much stiffer than shown in computer-generated films.

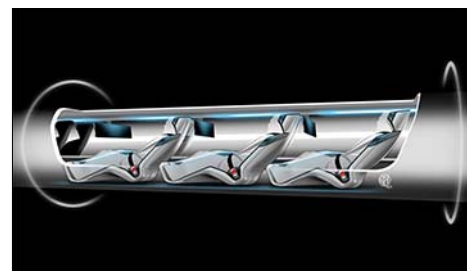
If the necks of sauropods were less flexible their feeding habits would be affected. For example, the dinosaurs may have had to move their whole bodies to reach some vegetation, and not just their necks. They might not have been able to eat plants that were above or below a certain height. With a less flexible neck sauropods probably had to travel much farther to find the food that they needed. ■

HYPERLOOP IDEA

Elon Musk is a wealthy American businessman. On 12th August he outlined an idea for a new way of travelling. Mr Musk says he would like a high-speed 'tube', or hyperloop, to be built. This hyperloop would connect the American cities of Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Mr Musk was one of the founders of the PayPal Company. It allows payments and money to be easily transferred using the internet. Mr Musk made a lot of money when PayPal was sold to eBay in 2002. Since then he has set up several new companies. One, called SpaceX, designs and builds space rockets. Last year one of the company's unmanned spaceships travelled to the International Space Station (ISS). Another of Mr Musk's companies is Tesla. It makes electric cars.

The hyperloop idea is for capsules to travel at high-speed along a very long tube. The distance between Los Angeles and San Francisco is about 610 kilometres (380 miles). People, and even cars, would travel inside the capsules. The tubes would be above ground on columns. Mr Musk suggests that the route could follow the motorway that currently links the two cities.



Drawing of the inside of hyperloop capsule

Special motors, which would be placed along the tubes at regular intervals, would power the capsules. Some of the air would be removed from the tubes. This would make the capsules go even faster. There would also be a small amount of air between the sides of the capsules and the inner walls of the tube. The motors would run on solar power.

Mr Musk says that capsules could depart every 30 seconds. They would travel at a speed of around 1,220 kilometres (760 miles) per hour. This means it would take about 30 minutes to travel from one city to the other. The businessman explained that travelling in the capsule would feel similar to flying in a passenger aircraft. He estimates that the price of a one-way ticket would be about US\$20 (£13).

Los Angeles and San Francisco are both in the state of California. Earthquakes in this part of the USA are not uncommon. The columns that hold the tubes above the ground would therefore have to be earthquake proof.

Mr Musk says that he is too busy to manage the hyperloop project. However, he may get some of the people who work for his new companies to build a smaller **prototype**. This would be needed to prove that the hyperloop works. Any prototype would probably take at least four years to design and construct. If the real one were ever to be built Mr Musk says several other large companies would need to help. ■

GIBRALTAR DISPUTE

A new dispute, or argument, about Gibraltar has recently broken out between the governments of Spain and the UK. Gibraltar is a peninsula near the southern tip of Spain. It used to belong to Spain. Yet for the last 300 years it has been controlled by the UK.

Spain would like the peninsula handed back. The British government has said that it would only do this if the 30,000 people who live in Gibraltar agreed. However, nearly all of them say they want Gibraltar to continue to be part of the UK. Nowadays both the UK and Spain are members of the European Union (EU).



Aerial picture of Gibraltar

Gibraltar is often called 'the Rock of Gibraltar', or just 'the Rock'. This is because most of it is taken up by a large limestone ridge, or headland. The territory is only

6.5 square kilometres (2.5 square miles). Even though it is small, Gibraltar is in a **strategically** important position. This is because ships based there can control the Strait of Gibraltar. This is the narrow sea channel where the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea meet.



The British captured Gibraltar in 1704. This was during the War of Spanish Succession (1701 – 1714). Several European countries fought in this war to stop the kingdoms of France and Spain becoming unified, or one country. The war finally ended with an agreement called the Treaty of Utrecht. This treaty was named after the Dutch city in which it was signed. Part of the Treaty said Gibraltar 'was to belong to Britain'.

The latest dispute began after the government of Gibraltar agreed to create a reef in the sea. Local officials said the reef, which is made out of large concrete blocks, is designed to encourage marine life. Yet the owners of some Spanish fishing boats were angry. They claimed the reef was meant to stop them fishing.

Spanish border officials then started to check all cars travelling between Gibraltar and Spain. These border checks took a long time. Drivers therefore had to wait for many hours to leave or enter Gibraltar. Spain then announced that it might decide to charge drivers €50.00 (£43) to cross the border. It said some of the money would be given to the Spanish fishermen.

The government of the UK complained to EU officials about the possible charges. Under EU rules people should not have to pay to cross a border between member countries. On 19th August one of the UK's warships arrived in Gibraltar. However, the UK's government insisted that this had nothing to do with the dispute. It said that the warship's visit had been planned a long time ago.

EU leaders have agreed to send a team of inspectors to Gibraltar to find a solution to the argument. Spain also wants the inspectors to investigate tobacco smuggling. Cigarettes are much cheaper to buy in Gibraltar than in Spain. This is because the tax on tobacco in Spain is much higher. Spanish officials claim that many thousands of cigarettes are smuggled across the border into Spain every day.

Spain has a number of small territories along the coast of Morocco. The two largest are called Ceuta and Melilla. These have been under Spanish control for hundreds of years. If the UK government ever gives Gibraltar back, Morocco is likely to demand that Spain hands over Ceuta and Melilla. ■

VOLCANO ERUPTS IN JAPAN

The Sakurajima volcano in southern Japan erupted on 18th August. The eruption covered the nearby city of Kagoshima with volcanic ash.

The outer layer of the Earth is known as the 'crust'. Tectonic plates are huge sections of the Earth's crust that move about slowly on the magma, or hot liquid rock, deep below the surface.

Volcanoes are often found where tectonic plates are being pulled apart

or pushed together. This movement can create a gap in the Earth's crust which allows the magma to come to the surface. Earthquakes are also common where these tectonic plates meet.

Japan is on what scientists call the 'Ring of Fire'. This is a horseshoe-shaped line running around the edge of the Pacific Ocean. This line marks the places where different tectonic plates 'bump' into each other. This explains why Japan has frequent earthquakes and many volcanoes.

Volcanoes are often described as being active, dormant or extinct. An active volcano is one that has erupted during the last several hundred years. If a volcano last erupted several thousand years ago it is called dormant. Extinct volcanoes are those that are thought unlikely to erupt ever again.

Sakurajima is one of Japan's most active volcanoes. It used to be an island. The volcano was surrounded by seawater in a large bay. This changed after a huge eruption in 1914. Lava flowing down one side of the volcano connected the island to the mainland. Before 1914 Sakurajima had not erupted for over 100 years.



Satellite picture of Sakurajima, in Japan

Since 1955 the volcano has been constantly erupting. This year there have been 500 small eruptions. Yet the recent one was the most powerful since 1955. The large eruption sent a cloud of ash five kilometres (three miles) into the air. Lava could

also be seen flowing down the sides of the volcano.

Many people live close to Sakurajima. The city of Kagoshima, which is only a few kilometres from the volcano, has a population of nearly 700,000.

After the recent eruption people in Kagoshima wore raincoats and used umbrellas to stop the ash landing on them. Car drivers switched on their headlights. Many said it was like driving through thick snow at night. Trains stopped running so the ash could be removed from railway tracks.

Kagoshima has a number of specially built shelters. These are designed to protect people from falling volcanic rocks. Local officials arrange frequent evacuation drills. These are to practise what people should do if there were a serious eruption. ■

CONDOR RESCUE

On 21st August, 18 condors were released in the Andes Mountains in Chile. These large birds are an endangered species. For the previous ten days the condors were given special medical treatment at a veterinary clinic, or animal hospital.

On 11th August a person, who had been skiing in the mountains, was driving home. He saw several condors lying by the side of the road. He immediately called the police. Other people saw some of the large birds flying low and crashing into rocks.

Officials and local volunteers travelled to the area. They found 17 condors. All of them were unable to fly. The following day another three were discovered but two of them had died.

There are two types of condor. One lives in the Andes Mountains. The other, or California condor, is found in mountain areas of the west coast of the USA and Mexico. Both types of condor are able to fly or glide for long distances. When doing this they rarely flap their wings. Often the birds wheel around, or follow a wide circular path, high in the air.



Andean condor

The Andean condor is one of the largest birds in the world. Adults have a wingspan of around 3.3 meters (ten feet) and can weight 15 kilograms (33 pounds). Condors are mainly black in colour. Yet they have a ring of white feathers around their necks and white markings on their large wings. Experts estimate that there are now only around 6,500 Andean condors living in the wild.

Condors are scavengers. This means they eat the meat from the bodies of other animals that are dying or have already died. They prefer larger animals such as cattle or deer. The birds may not eat for several days. Once condors find a dying or dead animal they will often eat as much as they can. Sometimes the birds eat so much that, for a time, they are unable to fly.

Condors make their nests on rocky ledges. Their young are able to fly after about six months. They stay with their parents for two years. In the wild condors may live for over 50 years.

Vets at the animal hospital think that the sick condors had all eaten poisoned meat. They said that the birds seemed to be suffering from lead poisoning. It's likely that the condors had all eaten meat from an animal that had been hit with lead bullets or lead shot. Sometime later the animal had died. Those looking for the sick condors said that they had also found two dead foxes. The condors were given special medical treatment. All the birds that were found alive recovered.

The condor is the national bird of Chile, Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. In the past it has been included on the stamps and banknotes of several of these South American countries. ■

WATERWAY SAFETY IN VENICE

On 19th August the leader of the Venice Gondoliering Association called for changes to be made to the city's Grand Canal. He said these were necessary to improve safety. The leader's suggestion was made the day after one person died in a boat crash. The accident happened on the Grand Canal.

The city of Venice was built in a saltwater lagoon at the northern end of the Adriatic Sea. Its buildings, many of which are hundreds of years old, range across 117 islands. Some of the buildings were built on large pieces of wood sunk into the lagoon. Venice has few streets and no cars. Instead the 'roadways' are canals or waterways. Most transport is done by boat. There are at least 400 bridges in the city.

Today Venice is part of Italy. Yet between the year 700 and the late 1700s it was an independent 'city state'. Venice is now one of the

world's most popular tourist destinations. Around 20 million people visit the city each year.

One thing that most tourists do when visiting Venice is to travel on a gondola. These are flat-bottomed wooden boats with curved ends. They are specially made from eight different types of wood. The gondolier, who wears a striped shirt and a hat, stands at the back of the boat. He is able to push it along with a single long oar. These oars are made out of wood from beech trees.



Rialto Bridge and gondola in Venice

Hundreds of years ago there were thousands of gondolas in Venice. Then, they were the main type of transport. Now there are just over 400. Nearly all of these are used to take tourists on trips around the city. Today there are many motorboats in Venice. The city operates a *vaporetto*, or waterbus, service. These boats travel on set routes and are able to carry many passengers.

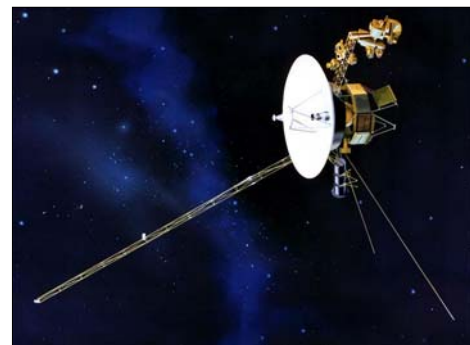
Gondoliers have to have a special licence. Venice's Gondoliering Association controls how many gondoliers there are. If someone wants to become a gondolier they must do a lot of training. Before being able to take passengers around the city they have to pass several exams. Some are like 'driving' tests. Yet other exams test their knowledge of the history of Venice and its main buildings. They also have to know a certain number of words in several foreign languages.

The accident happened on the Grand Canal. This is Venice's widest waterway. It is the main route from one side of the city to the other. A *vaporetto* crushed a gondola after the boat backed into it. The accident happened near to one of Venice's most famous landmarks, the Rialto Bridge. At the time a German family was in the gondola. The husband died. However, his wife, their three children and the gondolier managed to escape.

The leader of the Gondoliering Association has asked city officials to remove many of the piers on the sides of the Grand Canal. He says taking these away would make the canal wider and less congested. ■

HAS VOYAGER LEFT SOLAR SYSTEM?

Almost two years ago NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) announced that its *Voyager 1* unmanned spacecraft was about to leave the Solar System. This means it would enter what's known as interstellar space.



Artist's impression of Voyager 1 spacecraft

However, since then NASA says that information sent back by *Voyager 1* suggests it has yet to leave the Solar System. Not all astronomers, or scientists that study the planets and stars, agree. Recently, an university astronomer, who works in the USA, claimed

that *Voyager 1* probably reached interstellar space one year ago.

The twin spacecraft, or space probes, *Voyager 1* and *Voyager 2*, were both launched in 1977. So they have been in space for 36 years. They were designed to study distant parts of the Solar System, especially the two 'gas giants' Jupiter and Saturn. When they went past these planets they sent back many images of Saturn's rings, as well as the giant red spot on Jupiter. They also photographed and recorded information about two of Jupiter's larger moons, Europa and Io.

Voyager 1 is about 18.7 billion kilometres (11.6 billion miles) away from the Sun, or centre of the Solar System. It is travelling at a speed of just under 17.7 kilometres (11 miles) per second. *Voyager 2*, which is farther behind, is travelling in a different direction. It is roughly 15.3 billion kilometres (9.5 billion miles) from the Sun.

Before *Voyager 1* and *Voyager 2* were launched, discs made of copper, coated in gold, were put inside them. The discs, known as golden records, contain recorded information. This describes what the Earth and the Solar System are like.

The recorded information contains 100 pictures. These are of people, plants, foods, animals, insects, landscapes, and DNA. It also includes pieces of recorded music, greetings spoken in 55 languages, diagrams of the Solar System, and the sound of wind, waves, and thunder, plus the noises made by birds and whales.

The golden records were put inside the spacecraft in case intelligent civilisations, from far away planets, were ever to find either of them.

Also placed on the golden records were messages from Jimmy Carter and Kurt Waldheim (1918 – 2007). In 1977, Carter was president of the USA and Waldheim secretary-general of the United Nations (UN). President Carter's message was 'this is a present from a small, distant world, a token of our sounds, our science, our images, our music, our thoughts and our feelings. We are attempting to survive our time so we may live into yours.'

The boundary between the Solar System and interstellar space is known as the heliopause. This is where the particles from the Sun's solar wind can no longer be detected. NASA scientists say this boundary area, called the heliosheath, could continue for many millions of kilometres.

About 12 months ago *Voyager 1* detected a sudden drop in particles coming from the Sun. NASA also expects there to be a change in the magnetic field in interstellar space. Yet, so far, this has not happened. This is why NASA thinks the spacecraft is yet to leave the Solar System. The university astronomer thinks that the magnetic field is unlikely to change. He argues that the sudden drop in particles last year shows that the spacecraft is already in interstellar space.

Voyager 1 has enough power to keep sending information back to the Earth until 2020. ■

NEW CARNIVORE FOUND

Zoologists, or scientists that study animals, have discovered a new carnivore. The meat-eating animal looks a bit like a raccoon. It has been named the 'olinguito'.

The animal is the first new carnivore species to be discovered in the Americas (or North and South America) for 35 years. This is not the first time that an olinguito has been seen. There are specimens of them in some museums. Over 25 years ago one of the animals was kept in a zoo in Washington DC, the capital of the USA. Yet, until now, no one realised that they were a separate species. It was thought that they were a type of olingo.

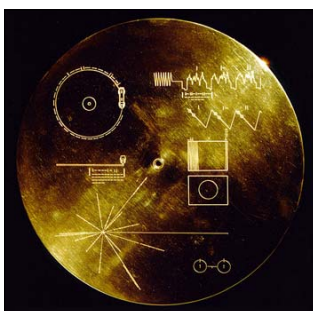
Olingos live in the rainforests of Central and South America. The name of the new animal, olinguito, means 'little olingo'.

A museum in Washington DC, the capital of the USA, has a large collection of mammal bones and specimens. Many were collected over a hundred years ago. While checking some of the collection a scientist found a set of bones he thought unusual. He had not seen this type of animal before. When the specimens were first collected scientists did not always recognise new species. Often they mistook them for others, which looked similar.



Olinguito (Mark Gurney)

Nowadays DNA tests can be done. These can then be compared with other DNA samples to see if they match. The scientist arranged a DNA test on the unfamiliar set of bones. He then compared the results with the DNA from other olingos. From these he was able to tell that



Cover of one of the golden discs

the bones belonged to a different species. The scientist then wondered if this new species was still living or if it had become extinct.

From specimens of the new species the scientist worked out what type of forest the animal was likely to live in. He and several others then went to look for it. They eventually found them living in the cloud forests of Colombia and Ecuador. Cloud forests are usually high up where mountains are often covered in clouds or fog. The scientists found many olinguitos, so they are unlikely to be an endangered species.

Olinguitos have orange-brown fur. They live in trees. The animals are about 35 centimetres (14 inches) long and eat both insects and fruit. Olinguitos are nocturnal, so they are active at night and sleep during the day.

Scientists classify living things into groups, or types. This is called taxonomy. Living things are put into large groups called phyla, then classes, orders, and families. Next comes the genus, and within that the species. The olinguito's genus is *Bassaricyon*. (The olingo has the same genus.) The new species has been given the scientific name *Bassaricyon neblina*. ■

MALI'S NEW PRESIDENT

An election was held for a new president in Mali on 11th August. Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta won. The election result means that Mali has now returned to a democratic system of government.

Trouble in Mali began over one year ago. In March 2012 a small group of army officers forced Mali's president to leave the country. They then took control of Bamako, the capital city.

For several years the Malian army had been fighting against Tuareg rebels in the north of the country. The Tuareg is a nomadic tribe. Its members mainly live in northern Mali and in parts of Niger, Algeria, and Libya. The Tuareg rebels wanted the northern part of Mali, which they call Azawad, to be a separate country.



Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta, new president of Mali

The Tuareg took advantage of what some army officers were doing in Bamako. It managed to force all the Malian soldiers to leave the northern part of the country. Several militant Islamic groups helped them.

Mali is a member of a group called ECOWAS (the Economic Community of West African States). This organisation has 15 member countries. Leaders of ECOWAS became alarmed at what was happening in Mali. They feared that the whole of Mali might be taken over by the militant Islamic groups. If that happened similar problems might spread to their own countries.

At first ECOWAS insisted that the army officers hand power back to a new president. After this was done ECOWAS began discussing ways of defeating the Islamic militants. But the militants then suddenly attacked a town near Bamako. The new president, Dioncounda Traoré, asked François Hollande, the president of France, for help.

Mali, like many other countries in North and West Africa, used to be a colony of France. These countries became independent nations in the

early 1960s. Yet France has continued to keep military bases in some of them. Mr Hollande immediately sent several thousand specially trained French troops to Mali. Most of these troops were based in Chad, another North African country.

Working with soldiers from the Malian army the French forces soon defeated the Islamic militant groups. By this time these groups and the Tuareg rebels had disagreed with each other. Several ECOWAS countries also sent troops to help.

The United Nations (UN) said that once the militant groups and Tuareg rebels were defeated an election should be held. The UN also agreed to send a large peace-keeping force to the north of Mali. This force officially took over from the French and ECOWAS troops on 1st July.

Mr Traoré declared that he would not take part in the election. However, he said he would continue to act as the president until the result was known.



The first part of the election was held at the end of July. There were more than 20 candidates. Under Mali's election rules, if no one gets over 50% of the votes in a presidential election there must be a second vote, or run off. When this happens the two candidates who received the highest number of votes take part.

As none of the candidates got more than half of the votes the election on 11th August was a run off. This time over 75% of the votes were for Mr Keïta. He therefore easily beat Soumaïla Cissé, who was the other candidate.

After the result was announced Mr Keïta declared that he planned to make a lasting peace with the Tuareg in the north. He also said that he would improve Mali's economy and stop the widespread corruption in the country. ■

PICASSO'S OSLO MURALS

An argument has begun in Norway about two government buildings. Both were badly damaged by an explosion two years ago. Some say that the buildings should be knocked down. Others disagree. This is because they contain unusual Picasso artworks.



Picasso mural, *The Fishermen*, on a wall of Y block, in Oslo, capital of Norway

The buildings are known as H block and Y block. They are part of a larger **complex** of government buildings in the centre of Oslo, the country's capital city. H block was where the prime minister had his office. The blocks were mainly built of concrete in the late 1950s and the 1960s. Nowadays many people think this style of architecture, known as 'Brutalist', is very ugly.

H and Y blocks contain some big artworks created by Norwegian artists. However, both buildings are best known for their large Picasso concrete murals.

Pablo Picasso (1881 – 1973) was born in Spain. Even though he didn't make much money from his paintings in his younger years, he later became very wealthy. To many people, Picasso is the 20th century's most famous painter. Today his pictures sell for many millions of dollars.

In the late 1950s and early 1970s Picasso was asked to create some large pictures, or murals, for H and Y blocks, in Oslo. He made some drawings of the murals. Some people say they look childlike. Carl Nesjar, a Norwegian artist, then set five of Picasso's designs in concrete, in a much larger size. The largest mural, called *The Fishermen*, is on one of Y block's outside walls. The others are on inside walls in H block.

This was the first time that Picasso had made murals like this. Later he and Mr Nesjar worked on similar large concrete murals. These are on buildings in Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, and Barcelona, in Spain.

In July 2011 a man called Anders Breivik parked a car outside H block. It contained a large bomb. When the car bomb exploded it badly damaged the surrounding buildings. The explosion killed eight people and injured over 200 others.

After leaving the car bomb Breivik travelled to an island about 40 kilometres (25 miles) from Oslo. At the time a summer camp for young people was being held on the island. Breivik had several guns with him. Before being arrested by the police he had shot and killed 69 people. Many others were badly wounded. Breivik is expected to spend most of the rest of his life in prison.

Several months ago the government asked a group of experts to suggest what should be done with the damaged buildings. Recently the group recommended that five of them be demolished, or knocked down. These included both H and Y block. The group said the Picasso murals could be 'cut out' and placed elsewhere.

However, others disagree. They argue that Picasso drew the murals for these buildings and moving them would be wrong. They say the buildings must be repaired. A newspaper has asked its readers what they think. Around 39% want the buildings demolished and 35% said they should be kept. The government will now have to decide what to do. ■

TSUNAMI BOAT VOTE

People living in the city of Kesennuma, in Japan, have taken part in a vote. It was held to decide what was to be done with the wreck of a large fishing boat. The boat was swept inland by a giant wave, or tsunami, that struck this part of Japan in 2011.



Kyotoku Maru in Kesennuma, Japan

The undersea earthquake, and the tsunami it triggered, or caused, was Japan's worst natural disaster for over 100 years. The earthquake had a magnitude of 9.0. This means it was one of the most powerful ever recorded. It damaged many buildings, roads and bridges in the north eastern part of Japan.

The giant wave that followed the earthquake was nine metres (30 feet) high. The seawater surged over seawalls and destroyed almost everything in its path. In some areas the sea reached ten kilometres (six miles) inland. Kesennuma was one of the places struck by the tsunami. The earthquake and tsunami killed about 19,000 people. In Kesennuma around 2,000 died.

The giant wave carried the tuna-fishing boat from Kesennuma's harbour to a **residential** part of the city. This is a distance of 750 metres (2,460 feet). All the buildings around the large boat were either knocked down or washed away.

The fishing boat is called the *Kyotoku Maru*. The names of all boats and ships in Japan end with the word 'maru'. This comes from a legendary figure in Japan called Hakudo Maru. He is said to have come to the Earth around 5,000 years ago and taught humans how to build ships. The word 'maru' means circle, which can describe a ship's voyage. The ship leaves the port then sails across the sea until it eventually comes back to the same place.

The wreckage of most of the destroyed buildings in Kesennuma has now been cleared away. Yet the 60-metre (200 foot) long *Kyotoku Maru* remains. Since the disaster many people have visited the boat. There, some pray for those who died. Many others leave flowers in remembrance of them.

To many the *Kyotoku Maru* has become a symbol of the 2011 earthquake and tsunami. These people, including the city's mayor, thought the ship should stay where the giant wave left it. They wanted it to be turned into a permanent monument or memorial. However, others disagreed. They insisted that the ship should be removed.

They said the wreck was a painful reminder of the terrible disaster.

Because of the disagreement a vote was held to decide what to do. Of those who took part 68% said that they wanted the ship to be removed. Therefore arrangements have now been made for a company to break up the *Kyotoku Maru* and take it away. This work will be completed within the next few months. Most of the ship's metal will be **recycled**. ■

CARDBOARD CATHEDRAL OPENS

A special service was held in an unusual building in the city of Christchurch, in New Zealand, on 15th August. The ceremony was to mark the official opening of the city's new, but temporary, cathedral. Most of the building, which can seat 700 people, is made out of cardboard. The temporary cathedral was completed about two and a half years after an earthquake hit Christchurch in 2011.



Temporary cathedral in Christchurch

The earthquake had a magnitude of 6.3. Its epicentre was not far from the city and quite close to the surface. So, even though its magnitude was not that big when compared with earthquakes in places like Japan and Chile, it caused a lot of damage.

The earthquake struck the city on a busy afternoon. People were out in the street, in shops, or at work in their offices. Many were injured or trapped by falling debris from

collapsing buildings. Almost 200 people were killed. A number of Christchurch's older buildings were badly damaged. Some could not be repaired. Many of these have now been demolished, or taken down.



Aerial picture of ChristChurch Cathedral taken after the 2011 earthquake (RNZAF)

One badly damaged building near the city centre was ChristChurch Cathedral. Work first began on the cathedral's construction around 130 years ago. Earthquakes are frequent in New Zealand. Most are not very powerful. Five previous earthquakes have damaged the cathedral. Yet each time it was possible to repair the building.

During the 2011 earthquake the cathedral's tall spire fell down. The earthquake was followed by many aftershocks, or further smaller earthquakes. Afterwards, engineers inspected all parts of the cathedral that were still standing. They said even though most of building had not collapsed, it was unsafe. This was because many of the walls had large cracks in them.

A decision was made to build a temporary cathedral. This would be used while the old building was either repaired or rebuilt. A design by Shigeru Ban was selected. Mr Ban is an architect from Japan. He is famous for designing large buildings made from paper and cardboard.

Mr Ban's design for the temporary cathedral is a triangular prism-shape. At one end there is a large window.

This is made up from many triangular pieces of coloured glass. The cardboard used for the outer walls and roof had a special substance added to it. It is this substance that makes this part of the building waterproof.

The temporary cathedral has been built where an old church once stood. This church, which was also badly damaged by the earthquake, had to be knocked down. The design of the cardboard cathedral is 'earthquake proof'. This means it will be able to withstand future earthquakes, even if they are much more powerful. Mr Ban says the cardboard building should last for at least 50 years.

Some parts of the old cathedral have been taken down. However, at the end of last year this work was stopped. This is because there is now an argument between people who want the old building repaired and those that want it completely rebuilt.

The temporary cathedral will not just be used for church services. Other events, such as concerts and art exhibitions, will also be held in the cardboard building. ■

INDEPENDENCE DAYS

Pakistan and India have both held special ceremonies to mark becoming independent nations 66 years ago. Pakistan's Independence Day is commemorated on 14th August and India's is celebrated the following day. In both countries Independence Day is a national holiday.

India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh were once all part of a large British colony known as India. The British ruled this part of the world for over 300 years. After the end of the Second World War (1939 – 1945) the leaders of the UK decided that they

could not control India any longer. There had been an increasing number of demonstrations in the colony. Those who took part in these protests wanted the British to leave, so India could have its own leaders.



Nawaz Sharif, prime minister of Pakistan

In 1947 the UK government agreed that the colony would be split into two independent countries. India was the largest, where most people were Hindu. The other, Pakistan, had a Muslim majority. At the time Pakistan also included an area called East Pakistan. This part of the country became a separate nation in 1971. Its name then changed to Bangladesh. The date of the 'transfer of power' from the UK to both India and Pakistan was set for midnight on 14th / 15th August 1947.

The first day of independence for both countries was therefore 15th August. However, in 1948, 14th August coincided with an important religious day in Pakistan. It was therefore decided to bring the Independence Day celebrations forward by one day. Since then, rather than going back to the 15th August date, Pakistan has commemorated its independence on this day.

Today both Pakistan and India have parliamentary systems of government. A prime minister leads each country. Usually, he or she is the person who leads the political party that has the most seats in the country's Congress, or parliament. Both countries also have a president. Yet their

presidents are not elected directly by all the people. Instead the elected members of Congress and local assemblies vote for them. The presidents of India and Pakistan have fewer powers than their prime ministers.

Since they were granted independence Pakistan and India have become rivals. They have frequent disagreements. It is not unusual for them to argue about where the border between them should be in a mountainous region called Kashmir. In the past both Indian and Pakistani troops have fired at each other across this part of the border.

Last May Nawaz Sharif became Pakistan's prime minister. This was after his party, the Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N), easily won the recent election. Pakistan has had many problems. In recent years there has been fighting in the north of the country. This has been between the army and militant groups that want parts of Pakistan to be ruled under strict Islamic laws. The country has also been hit by serious flooding.



Dr Manmohan Singh, prime minister of India

On Pakistan's Independence Day Mr Sharif made a speech, in Islamabad, the capital city. The prime minister said that the militant groups would be defeated. He also declared that in the future Pakistan would be a peaceful nation.

Dr Manmohan Singh has been India's prime minister since 2004. Each year, on 15th August, the prime minister, hoists, or pulls up,

the Indian flag at the Red Fort, in the city of Delhi. Parts of this castle-like building are over 400 years old. The prime minister also makes an Independence Day speech from a rampart, or one of the walls, of the fort.

During his speech Dr Singh said he wanted to improve India's relationship with Pakistan. He also spoke about an accident that had happened a few days earlier. He praised the 18 sailors who had been killed by an explosion on an Indian submarine. ■

RETURN FROM THE JUNGLE

Local officials in Vietnam have managed to persuade two men to leave their tree house in a jungle in Vietnam. The men, an elderly father and his 42-year-old son, had been living in the jungle for over 40 years.

In 1972 Ho Van Thanh, who is now 82 years old, was a soldier in the army of North Vietnam. At that time a war was being fought in Vietnam. One day he went back to his village. There he discovered that a bomb explosion had killed his mother and two young relatives. Mr Ho was very upset about what had happened. He decided not to return to the army. Instead he and his wife, and their two sons, went to live in another village.

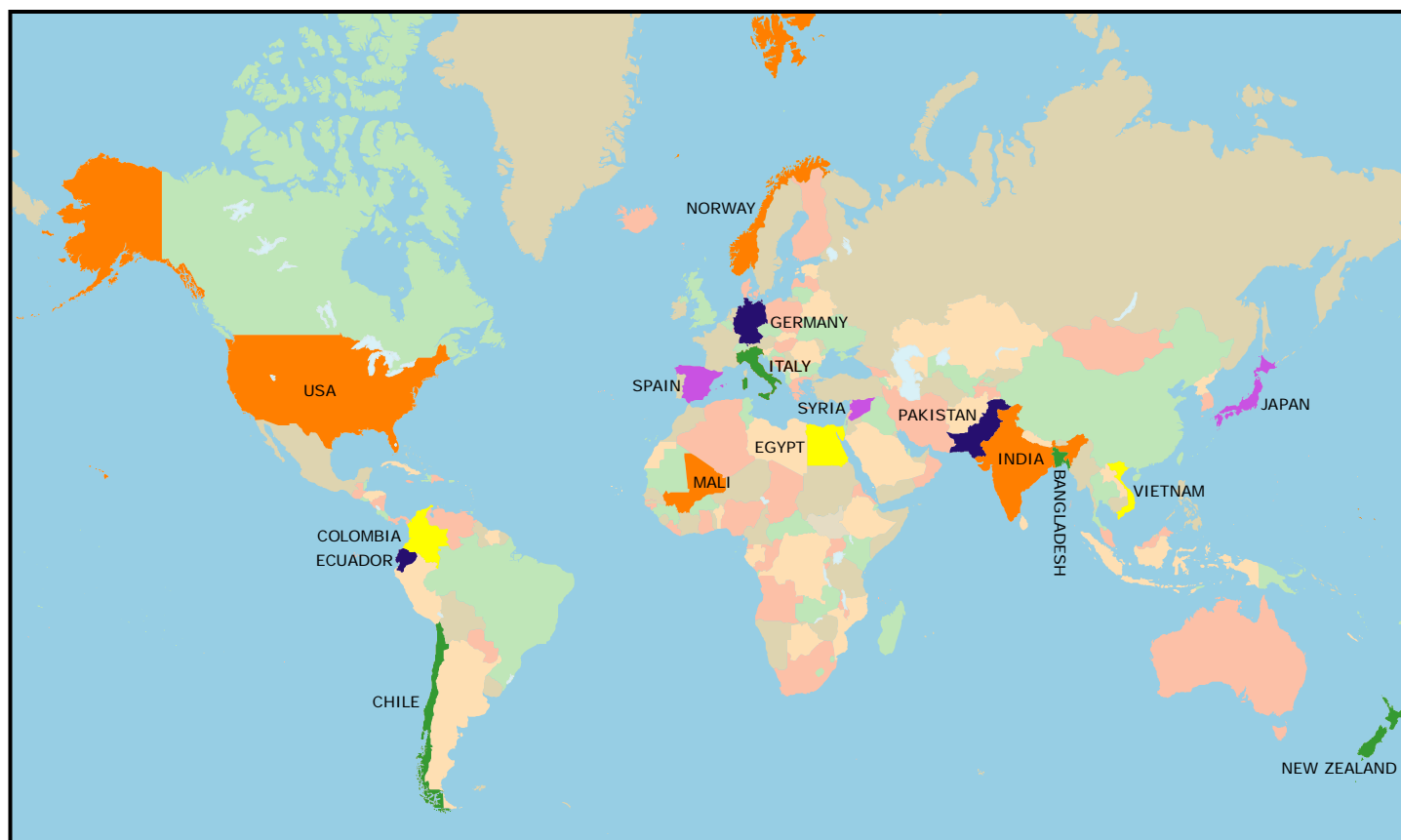
Later Mr Ho and his wife argued. Mr Ho struck his wife and she had to have medical treatment. Then, taking one of his young sons with him, Mr Ho ran into the jungle.

Vietnam is a former colony of France. In 1954, when the French left, the country was divided in two, North Vietnam and South Vietnam. North Vietnam was a communist country. It planned to take control

of the South. Fighting broke out between them. By the 1960s the USA had become worried about what was happening. Its leaders thought other countries, in this part of Asia, would be taken over by communists if North Vietnam succeeded. The USA then decided to send troops to help South Vietnam.

During the Vietnam War (1964 – 1973) American soldiers worked with the South Vietnamese army. They fought against a group called the Viet Cong. This group was made up of soldiers from North Vietnam and men and women from South Vietnam who supported the North. Most of the fighting was in South Vietnam. The Viet Cong's weapons were supplied by Russia and China. During the war American air force planes bombed many parts of North Vietnam.

Eventually, in 1973, the USA left South Vietnam. But the war didn't



finally end until North Vietnam invaded the South in 1975. The invasion led to the collapse of the South Vietnamese government. The North then took control of the whole country.

Mr Ho worked as a [blacksmith](#) in the North Vietnamese army. Several months after going into the jungle he returned to the village to look for his wife and other son. Local people feared he would harm her, so they told him that both of them had died. After hearing the news Mr Ho returned to the jungle. He moved to an area far away, where local people never went. There he built a tree house.



Jungle in Vietnam

His son, Lang, grew up in the jungle. The two men caught animals for food. They also collected fruit and grew some corn. As Mr Ho's other son got older he was told that his father and older brother were killed in the war. Yet just before his mother died she confessed. She told her son that his father and brother were probably still alive and living in the jungle. Many years ago he decided to look for them. He eventually found their tree house. But his father did not believe that he was his son. The son was not able to persuade his father and brother to leave their jungle house.

Recently, a group of people collecting firewood saw Lang. They told local officials that there was a strange man deep in the jungle. The officials then went to search the area where Lang had been seen. They

found the tree house. This time the two men agreed to leave. One reason was that Mr Ho had become ill and needed hospital treatment. Both men are finding it difficult to get used to their new life. Lang is now 42 years old. He has spent his whole life in the jungle and can only speak a few words.

The story of the two men's return from the jungle has caused many discussions in Vietnam. Some people say the father and son should be allowed to go back to the jungle if they wish to. Others argue it would be better for them to stay in 'the modern world'. ■

NDEs EXPLAINED?

Scientists working in the USA have recently completed several experiments using rats. They discovered that there was a sudden increase in electrical activity in rats' brains just after their hearts stopped beating. The scientists say that their experiments may help to explain what are often called 'near-death experiences' or NDEs.

Many people claim to have had NDEs. They seem to happen when people are very ill in hospital having life-saving operations or involved in bad accidents.

Those who have had an NDE often say that they seem to have 'floated out' of their bodies. They describe being able to see themselves lying on the ground or on a hospital bed below. Others talk about travelling, very fast, along a tunnel, which has a bright light at the end. Once they arrive at the light they meet other long-dead members of their families. Some talk about seeing angels and religious figures. Others say they are able to look

back on what has happened during their lives. Then, some type of force suddenly pulls them back down the tunnel. Afterwards they re-enter, or go back into, their own bodies again.



An NDE often involves a tunnel with a bright light

Some people who have had an NDE have actually 'died and then come back to life again'. They may have been having an important operation in hospital. Their hearts have stopped, but doctors have managed to restart them after a few minutes. So for a short time, while their hearts were not beating, they have been [clinically](#) dead. When a person's heart stops beating in this way it is known as cardiac arrest. Around 10% of people who have had cardiac arrest and survived say they had some kind of 'out of body' experience.

Not surprisingly those who have experienced an NDE often believe they have seen a [glimpse](#) of heaven, or the afterlife. Some say they now know what happens when you die. Having an NDE can sometimes cause people to change. For example, a non-religious person may become very religious after an NDE. Often they talk about not being afraid of dying, as they already know what happens.

However, most scientists are doubtful. They suspect that an NDE is just a person's own mind, or brain, playing tricks on him or her. They are sure that there must be a scientific explanation.

In their recent experiments the scientists recorded the gamma oscillations, or certain types of brainwaves, in nine rats. First they stopped the animals' hearts. So this was like a cardiac arrest. They then immediately began to record the rats' brainwaves. The scientists discovered that the rats' brains suddenly became very active for about 30 seconds. They then stopped working and there was no electrical activity.

The scientists suspect that this sudden increase in brain activity, after the heart stops, may explain NDEs. If true, the 'visions' that people, who have had an NDE, talk about are created by their brains. This means they are imaginary and not real.

Yet other scientists say the brains of rats and humans are very different. A more useful experiment, they argue, would be on humans. However, several people who need operations where cardiac arrest was possible would have to agree to this. ■

LEFT HANDERS DAY

International Left-Handers Day was on 13th August. This event was first held just over 20 years ago. It is now an annual celebration for anyone who is left-handed. The event is organised by a group called the International Left-Handers Club, which was set up in 1990.

Most people in the world are right-handed. This means that they naturally use their right hand when writing or holding a knife or a bat or racquet. It's thought that between seven and ten percent of the world's population are left-handed. A few people are able

to use both hands equally. Those who can do this are described as being ambidextrous.

Hundreds of years ago many people believed there was something wrong with those who used their left hand. Some thought it had something to do with the influence of witches or the Devil. For example, in English, when something is described as sinister it means it is evil or threatening. The word sinister comes from Latin for 'left-hand side'. In old pictures or statues the Devil, or Satan, is normally shown to be left-handed.



Barack Obama, president of the USA

Left-handedness was believed to be bad. The French word *gauche* means awkward. *Gauche* in French also means 'left'. The expression 'having two left feet' means someone is clumsy or has a lack of skill. In the recent past some parents would try to force their young children to use their right hands if they were left-handed.

In the modern world some people think that being left-handed is a disadvantage. This is because most items are made for right-handers. Many tools, for example, are designed for use with the right hand. These include chain saws and drills. Kitchen items such as scissors and tin openers are easier to use with the right hand. In the classroom it can be difficult for a left-handed person to write in a notebook that has a ring binder.

However, many clever people have been left-handers. Isaac Newton (1642 – 1727), who was an English scientist and mathematician, was left-handed. He was the first person to realise that an invisible force holds planets in orbit around their sun, or star. He also worked out that it is the same force, which we call gravity, that pulls us back to the ground if we jump in the air. Several well-known Renaissance artists, such as Michelangelo, Raphael and Leonardo da Vinci, were all left-handed.

Many of the more recent presidents of the USA have been left-handers. They include Gerald Ford, Ronald Reagan, George H W Bush, and Bill Clinton. The current American president, Barack Obama, is also left-handed.

In the UK, Queen Elizabeth the Second uses her left hand. So does her son, Prince Charles. What's more Prince William, Prince Charles' eldest son and the Queen's grandson, is also left-handed.

The International Left-Handers Club works to make people aware of difficulties that left-handed people have in everyday life. It says it also tries to get companies, which produce hand held items, to alter their designs or make special versions for left-handers. ■

UN INSPECTORS ARRIVE

A UN team of 20 people arrived in Damascus, the capital of Syria, on 18th August. The group is made up of specially trained inspectors and their assistants. Their job is to find out if chemical weapons have been used during the recent fighting in Syria.

The fighting in Syria started two and a half years ago. It began after the government ordered the army to

use weapons to stop street protests. The demonstrators were complaining about the country's president, Bashar al-Assad, his government and the police force. The president and his family have controlled Syria for over 40 years.

It's thought that the violence has been the cause of at least 80,000 deaths. Over one million Syrians have crossed the borders into Turkey, Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon to get away from the fighting. Many people in certain parts of Syria support Mr al-Assad. The Syrian army is on one side and a number of different opposition groups are on the other. These groups are often called the rebels. In recent months there has been fierce fighting near several cities, such as Homs and Aleppo.



Many countries have declared that they support the rebels. These countries include the USA, European Union (EU) members and many Arab nations. This has led to disagreements with Russia. This is because, for many years, Russia has supported the Syrian government and Mr al-Assad.

Rebel leaders say they are unlikely to defeat the Syrian army without more powerful weapons. They want the countries that support them to provide the weapons they need. Yet, so far, countries such as the USA and the UK have decided not to do this. They worry that those fighting against the Syrian

army include some militant Islamic groups. In future, these groups may become enemies. This is why they are reluctant to supply the rebels with weapons.

Even though it has never admitted it, Syria is known to have stores of chemical weapons. These are believed to be different types of highly poisonous, or toxic, gases. These types of weapons are very dangerous and can quickly kill many thousands of people. They can be dropped from planes or fitted to both short- and long-range missiles. Chemical weapons are often described as Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). Under international law, it is illegal to use them.

Rebel leaders claim that the Syrian army has used chemical weapons in several places. However, not many people were affected. Some people believe that a few artillery shells or small missiles filled with a type of poisonous gas were fired.

Barak Obama, the president of the USA, has declared that any use of chemical weapons by the Syrian army would be a 'red line'. A red line is a point beyond which a person or group will no longer talk or negotiate. Most people believe that Mr Obama meant that he would be prepared to help the rebels if the Syrian army used chemical weapons. Some people even think Mr Obama would be prepared to send American troops to the country to stop any use of chemical weapons.

Syrian government officials insist that no chemical weapons have been used. They say the rebels probably organised a few small gas attacks. The rebels, the officials explained, could then blame this on the Syrian army. If the USA and other nations believed this, they might then be more likely to help the rebels.

NewsCAST

ANIMAL ARCHAEOLOGIST — A badger in Germany has helped archaeologist discover the ancient graves, or tombs, of two lords, or chieftains. The graves are thought to be over 800 years old. The badger had dug an underground home, or burrow, near a farm. The two people who live on the farm are interested in archaeology. One day they noticed a human bone near the badgers burrow and realised that the animal must have dug it up. They managed to push a small camera into the burrow and take some photographs by remote control. In the pictures were some pieces of jewellery. They informed local officials who sent a team of archaeologists to the farm. As well as the two skeletons the archaeologists discovered two bronze bowls, a sword and a belt buckle.

It has taken UN officials several months to get Syria's president and his government to agree to the inspectors' visit. The inspectors have been given permission to go to three areas where chemical attacks are said to have happened. One is close to the city of Aleppo. By testing soil samples the inspectors should be able to find out if chemical weapons were used in these places.

On 21st August rebels groups said that a much bigger poisonous gas attack had taken place. They claimed this attack that took place in part of Damascus, the capital city, killed hundreds of people. Syrian government officials insisted this was not true. Leaders in the USA, the UK and France have asked the UN to try to get its inspectors in Syria to investigate what happened in this part of Damascus. ■

SEARCHING FOR MONA LISA

Recently a round hole was made in the stone floor of a church in the city of Florence, in Italy. Professor Silvano Vinceti, who is an Italian art historian, arranged for the hole to be cut. It was above an old family tomb, or crypt. Professor Vinceti hopes that some of the bones inside the crypt will help him to answer a question: who was the *Mona Lisa*?



Mona Lisa

The *Mona Lisa* is probably the most famous painting in the world. Most art experts think that Leonardo da Vinci (1452 – 1519) was asked to paint the picture sometime between 1503 and 1506. They believe the painting is a portrait of Lisa Gherardini. She was the wife of a wealthy silk [merchant](#) and mother of many of his children. The family lived in Florence.

The reason the woman in the painting is believed to be Lisa Gherardini is because of a book about Da Vinci. The biography was written about 30 years after the artist

died. In the book the writer says Da Vinci had painted a picture of Lisa Gherardini. In Italian *Mona* means ‘madam’ or ‘my lady’.

However, if Lisa Gherardini’s husband asked Da Vinci to paint his wife’s portrait, it seems the artist was not paid for it. This is because Da Vinci took the painting with him when he moved to France ten years later. Some think it may have taken Da Vinci 15 years to complete. It’s said that the picture was one of his favourites, as he kept it with him until he died. After Da Vinci’s death the King of France acquired the portrait.

Da Vinci was not just a painter. He was also an expert mathematician, engineer, inventor, writer, sculptor, architect, [anatomist](#), and botanist, or a scientist who studies plants.

Today the *Mona Lisa* is displayed in the Louvre art gallery in Paris, the capital of France. The picture is 77 centimetres by 53 centimetres (30 inches by 21 inches), so it is not very big. The portrait was painted in a style called sfumato. This name comes from the Italian word ‘fumo’, which means smoke. Sfumato is a style where there are no borders between different colours. Instead the colours are blended, or merged into each other.

The painting is famous for the woman’s mysterious hint of a smile. Some people think she is smiling, while others think she is not. There are many theories about who the person in the picture is. A few people believe the face in the painting is really that of a man and not a woman. Others have even suggested that it was a self-portrait. Some believe the background contains a hidden message.

Lisa Gherardini is thought to have died in 1542. One of her daughters became a nun at a local

convent. Professor Vinceti believes her mother eventually went to live with this daughter. Then, when she died, the daughter arranged for her mother to be buried in one of two crypts below the convent’s floor. Last year Professor Vinceti found the bones of several women in these crypts. These were then tested. Only three skeletons were found to be of women who were buried after 1500.

Professor Vinceti suspects that one of them is Lisa Gherardini. To confirm this he got permission to open her husband’s family tomb in the church. He now plans to arrange a DNA test. He hopes to match the DNA of one of Lisa Gherardini’s sons, whose bones were in the church tomb, with the DNA of the three women found in the convert crypt.

Professor Vinceti says that if there is a DNA match it will prove that he has found the bones of Lisa Gherardini. If the plan works, he then wants to use the woman’s skull to make a model of her face. This, Professor Vinceti claims, will finally prove if the *Mona Lisa* really is a portrait of Lisa Gherardini. ■

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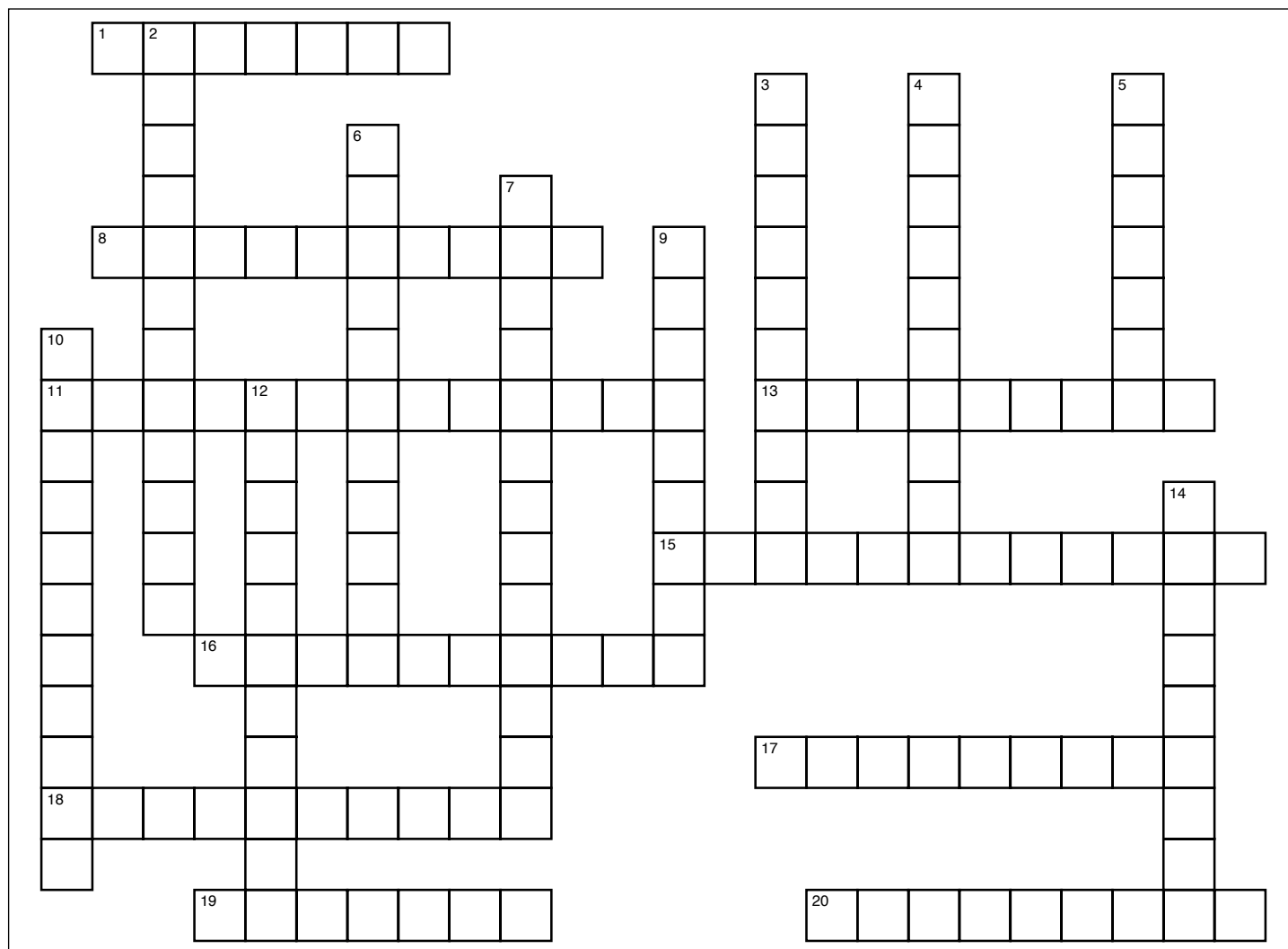
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ISSUE 204

GLOSSARY PUZZLE

INSTRUCTIONS: ① Complete the crossword. The answers are highlighted in orange in the news stories. There are 25 words highlighted and you need 20 of them to complete the crossword. ② Once you have solved the crossword go to the word search on the next page ➡



Across

- 1 Adjective** Describes people who live by moving from place to place rather than having a fixed place to live
- 8 Noun** A person who heats iron and shapes it into useful items
- 11 Noun** The act of getting rid of certain animals or people, usually by killing them all
- 13 Noun** A person who studies the human body
- 15 Noun (Plural)** Places to which people are going
- 16 Verb** Gave someone their previous job or position back
- 17 Noun** A substance similar to bone that surrounds the joints
- 18 Adverb** In the opinion of medical experts
- 19 Verb** To see something for a very short period of time
- 20 Adjective** Overcrowded or blocked

Down

- 2 Noun (Plural)** Regular movements that go backwards and then forwards repeatedly
- 3 Noun (Plural)** Barriers to prevent access
- 4 Noun** The movement of people to a place of safety
- 5 Noun (Plural)** Mystical or religious experiences of seeing a supernatural image or event
- 6 Noun** A group of organisations such as societies or clubs that work together
- 7 Adverb** Relating to military or political plans to gain an advantage
- 9 Verb** Happened at or near the same time
- 10 Adjective** Related to a period in European history between the 14th and 17th centuries during which there was a great revival of art, literature, and learning
- 12 Adjective** Describes a place or building where people live
- 14 Noun** An effect on someone or something

Issue 204

GLOSSARY PUZZLE *CONTINUED*

S N O I T A L L I C S O S B A P F N
 T N Y R L I Y D I T B P L I H M J O
 R R O T S I M O T A N A Q M L L B I
 A R K I L M G Q R O C S Z L Z M N T
 T B L K T M K R T K K X U A Q C O A
 E R F E R A I L S C D D N M L B I I
 G N X O P C N M A C G O X I R B T C
 I M P E A Y I I V I I Q N S N J A O
 C B V D C T T C T T T I W C Z Z U S
 A P E O H N O O A S C N O A V J C S
 L S A P F M E N T A E I E R I Q A A
 L X L X P E I U L O N D D D S U V J
 Y W J L Z M Z L L C R Z Z L I E E U
 M M E H R G Y K I F M P R C O S M L
 X X Y E I U T D Z D N X O X N J E U
 R D T J U G E Y U G L I M P S E E R
 V X O R I D E T A T S N I E R A B M
 E C N A S S I A N E R J W P W U Z J

INSTRUCTIONS: ③ Find 19 of the 20 crossword answers in the word search. Words can go vertically, horizontally, diagonally and back to front. ④ After finding the 19 words write down the 20th (or missing) word under the puzzle.

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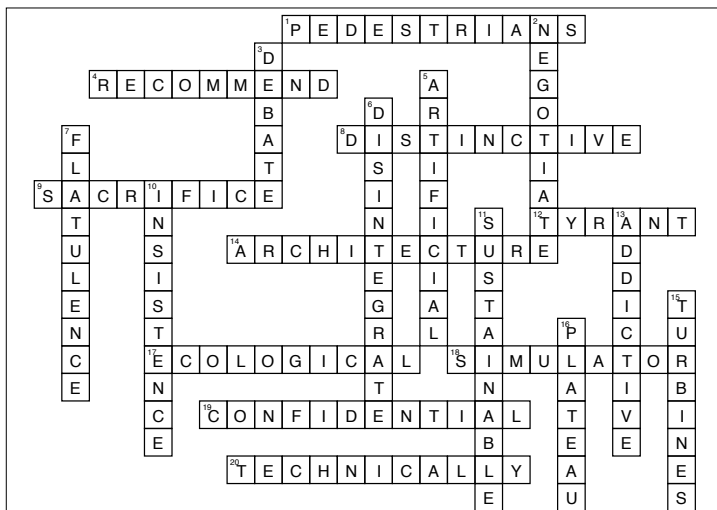


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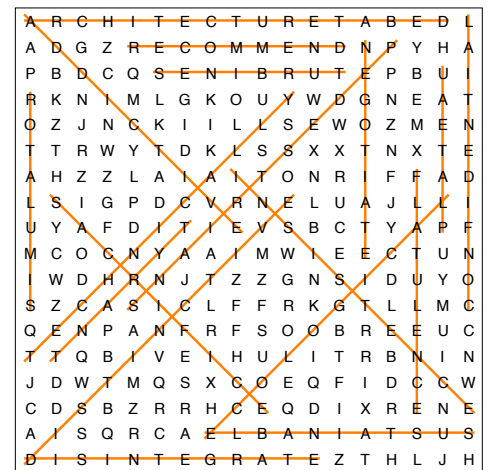
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MISSING WORD ANSWER =



ISSUE 203 ANSWERS



A R T I F I C I A L